

Economic Development

For reference while drafting this section – Remove before publication

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion, of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local governmental unit, including an analysis of the labor force and economic base of the local governmental unit. The element shall assess categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that are desired by the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the local governmental unit’s strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and shall designate an adequate number of sites for such businesses and industries. The element shall also evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The element shall also identify county, regional and state economic development programs that apply to the local governmental unit.

Overview

The Town of Nepeuskun is a rural community focused on agricultural production. The town is located in close proximity to nearby bustling metropolitan areas (Ripon and the Fox Valley) which provides benefits and challenges for Nepeuskun. Residents of Nepeuskun enjoy the privacy and quality of life associated with rural living, and benefit from easy access to a variety of jobs located in nearby cities.

Nepeuskun has long based its local economy on agricultural production, but in recent years employment in agriculture and forestry has seen a drastic decrease. While there has also been a decrease in manufacturing employment by Nepeuskun residents, the services sector has seen a large increase in the percentage of employed residents. As increasing development pressure is placed on agricultural land in the area, the decrease in agricultural jobs may continue leading to a necessary increase in other employment options for Nepeuskun residents. Given the lack of infrastructure for significant commercial or industrial development in Nepeuskun, most of these jobs will need to be provided in adjacent municipalities or through home occupations.

The community survey guided the issues addressed in this plan, including tourism and development. The majority of residents, 62 percent, felt that the amount of commercial development in the town is sufficient. But through the planning process, residents felt the need to increase the tax base and local service opportunities by allowing limited commercial activity in

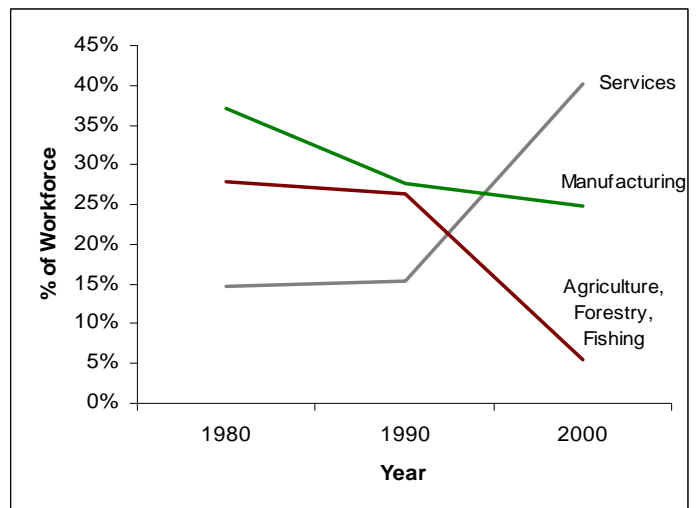
the future. The majority of survey respondents, 51 percent, also felt that tourism does not necessarily need to play a key role in the local economy, while 40 percent felt tourism was somewhat important for the local economy. The town residents are looking to maintaining their rural character by limiting commercial and tourism activities throughout the town.

Employment

Job Types

The types of jobs that town residents are engaged in have shifted over the past 25 years. The most significant shifts have occurred primarily in three sectors: Manufacturing, Services, and Agriculture, forestry and fishing. Manufacturing and agriculture have both experienced an overall decline, whereas the number of people employed in services has increased.

Chart 7-1. Manufacturing, Services and Agriculture Service



Source: U.S. Census, STF3

In 1980 there were an estimated 116 people employed in manufacturing, representing 37 percent of the workforce. By 2000, the total number of manufacturing jobs had decreased by 10 percent to 105 persons. However, the percent of the total workforce employed in manufacturing slipped during this period to 25 percent. Despite this decline, the number of persons in Nepeuskun employed in manufacturing remains fairly strong.

Unfortunately, the number of people working in agriculture, forestry or fishing has declined significantly since 1980. Between 1980 and 1990 the number of people employed in these industries increased by two workers, and the percentage of the workforce declined slightly from 28 percent to 26 percent. Between 1990 and 2000, however, the number of people employed in agriculture and forestry decreased from 89 workers to 23, plummeting from 26 percent of the total workforce to comprising only 5 percent in 2000.

While manufacturing and agriculture employment have declined, employment in the service sector has increased significantly. In 1980 services accounted for 15 percent of the labor force and 46 jobs. By 2000, the number of Nepeuskun residents employed in the services sector had increased by 125 jobs and accounted for 40 percent of total employment.

The number of people employed in transportation and warehousing, and communication and utilities have also increased representing 5 percent and 3 percent, respectively, of the workforce in 2000.

Unemployment Rates

The unemployment rate in Nepeuskun was 2.2 percent in 1990 and a remarkable 0.0 percent in 2000 (US Census). This likely reflects a data sampling issue, rather than the reality of unemployment in Town. According to the US Census, the Winnebago County unemployment rate was 4.3 percent in 1990 and 3.7 percent in 2000. At the state level, the unemployment rate was 5.2 in 1990 and 4.7 percent in 2000.

Education and Income Levels

Nepeuskun residents have generally achieved slightly lower education levels than the rest of Winnebago County. In 2000, 11 percent of the town’s population had a college degree or higher, while Winnebago County residents saw 24 percent with a college degree or higher. Also, 85 percent of Nepeuskun residents have obtained a high school diploma or higher. It is important to note that Winnebago County contains UW-Oshkosh and is an relatively easy commute to the Fox Valley and Green Bay employment centers.

Nepeuskun residents experienced a 10 percent increase in median household income levels between 1990 and 2000. According to the US Census, the median household income in 2000 was \$47,344, only slightly lower than the Winnebago County median household income of \$49,043.

Chart 7-1. Nepeuskun Education Attainment, US Census

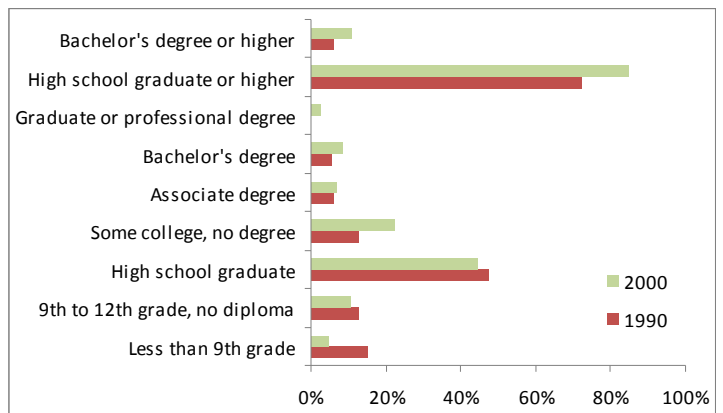
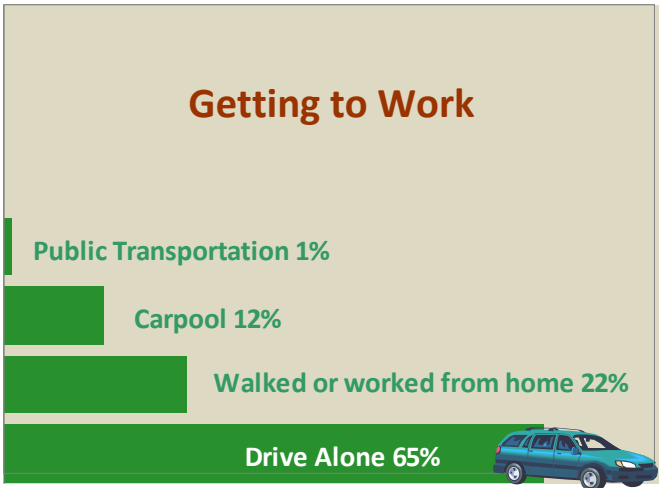


Figure 7-1. Commuting Behaviors, US Census



The Commute to Work

More and more people who live in Nepeuskun are finding work outside the community. In 1990, 53 percent of residents worked in Winnebago County. By 2000, this had decreased to 44 percent of residents. As of 2000, less than 10 percent of Nepeuskun’s working residents worked in the town (this data is not available at the Town level for 1990).

Despite this trend, commute times seem to be getting shorter for many residents. As of 2000, 65 percent of the workforce population of Nepeuskun drove 15 or more minutes to work, down from 71 percent in 1990.

On the other hand, more people are also driving to work alone. Eighty-two percent of residents drove to work alone in 2000, up from 65 percent of residents in 1990. There was a corresponding decrease in the number of people who walked, worked from home, or carpooled to work. These trends may begin to change as gas prices and the cost of driving continue to increase.

Businesses in Nepeuskun and Winnebago County

There are only a handful of non-agricultural businesses in town. These include car repair shops and restaurants, located in the Village of Rush Lake and along State Highway 91, and a hunt club. Agricultural-based businesses are much more numerous, and include more

than a dozen active farms and a produce distribution business.

Home Based Businesses

The number of people working from home declined dramatically between 1990 and 2000. In 1990, 20 percent of the town’s workforce (64 out of 313 people) worked from home. By 2000, this decreased to 4 percent of the workforce (17 out of 389 people). This is in part reflective of changes in agricultural employment (there was a drastic decrease in agricultural-based employment between 1990 and 2000 as discussed above).

Home based businesses, however, have a long and prosperous history in rural communities, and it is likely that they will play a part in the future of economic development in Nepeuskun.

Nepeuskun Strengths and Weaknesses

Economic development is closely tied to a number of other issues addressed in this Comprehensive Plan, including transportation, natural and agricultural resources, utilities and community facilities, and land use. A brief summary of associated strengths and weaknesses that relate to economic development are discussed below. These strengths and weaknesses are also discussed in greater detail in the corresponding chapters of this plan.

Nepeuskun is strategically located within close proximity to Oshkosh, Fond du Lac and the Fox Valley cities. The proximity of these metropolitan areas creates opportunities as well as challenges. On the one hand, residents are within commuting distance of a large pool of employment opportunities. The metropolitan areas also provide a significant number of potential tourists and visitors within an easy drive. On the other hand, many residents drive out of town to access goods and services, thereby undermining support for local businesses in Nepeuskun. Future economic growth will benefit tremendously by creating

a draw for regional tourists and by encouraging residents to buy local.

Rush Lake and its surrounding natural beauty have long attracted hunters, fishers, and nature lovers to the Nepeuskun area. Rush Lake, as well as the Waukau Creek, have the potential to attract tourists and hunters to the town as a way to bring outside money into the area. Current efforts are underway to improve the condition and access to Rush Lake.

Growth Opportunities

Regional Trends

In the Fox Valley region of Wisconsin, jobs are expected to grow from 283,330 non-farm jobs in 2004 to 312,660 by 2014 (based on Wisconsin OEA economic projections). While much of this growth will likely occur in the metropolitan areas, these trends suggest the types of potential growth opportunities that might be available to the Town of Nepeuskun residents.

Types of Businesses Preferred by Residents

Residents of Nepeuskun have expressed a strong desire to maintain the rural and agricultural character of the town, particularly as new development comes to town. Business development provides many positive benefits to the town (tax base, jobs, services close to home); however, it is critical that these new businesses fit into the existing rural character of the town and support, rather than detract from, the rural agricultural economy.

Home based and other small-scale businesses that would generally fit into the rural character of the community include:

- Industries related to the production, processing, marketing, and sale of agricultural and natural resource-based products, such as timber harvesting, sawmills, maple syrup production, farmstands, fruit orchards, nurseries, fish farms, animal husbandry, dairy farms, food and herb

processing, and feed, seed, and equipment dealers.

- Overnight lodging, restaurants, arts, entertainment, and recreation, such as cafes, taverns, B&Bs, retreat centers, artist studios, and hunt clubs.
- Small businesses, including retail, many home-based, and profession services such as construction, well-drilling, snowplowing, landscaping, daycare, veterinarians, fine carpentry, and general stores.

[Insert additional information from the Community Survey.]

Contaminated Sites

The Wisconsin DNR's Environmental Remediation and Redevelopment Program maintains a list of contaminated sites, or "brownfields," in the state. The DNR defines brownfields as "abandoned or underutilized commercial or industrial properties where expansion or redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination." Properties listed in the DNR database are self-reported, and do not necessarily represent a comprehensive listing of possible locations in a community. There are three types of sites listed in the BRRTS database; Spills, Leaking Underground Storage Tanks, and Environmental Repair Sites.

There are currently no open contaminated sites, listed by the DNR, in the Town of Nepeuskun. There are three sites listed that have completed cleanup of leaking underground storage tanks in Nepeuskun.

Economic Development Programs

Statewide Programs

At the state-level there is a wide range of programs to assist business retention, expansion and relocation. The Department of Commerce (DOC) is the lead economic development agency in the state and administers a number of programs. The Department of

Transportation (WisDOT) plays a much smaller, but important, role as well. State and federal economic development programs are outlined in the box below.

Forward Wisconsin is a nonprofit organization created as a public-private partnership to attract new businesses and jobs, and increase economic activity in the state. The group focuses on six target industries (computer & data processing services, plastics, business services, forest products, biotechnology and production machinery & equipment) and one secondary target industry (customer service centers).

Regional Program

Winnebago County is a member of the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission which is responsible for preparing various economic development strategies for the region. These strategies are described in the 2002 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy report that is used to distribute Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for designated projects in each county within the region.

County Programs

The Winnebago County Industrial Development Board (IDB) directly administers or has access to economic development programs that financially assist local units of government and business in the county. Their mission is to create and retain quality job opportunities, increase the county's tax base, and raise income levels for local residents. Programs administered by the IDB include:

- Marketing and Promotional Program
- Revolving Loan Fund for local governments to finance infrastructure improvements, purchase real estate, and assist business looking to expand or relocate.
- Winnebago County Per Capita Funding Program to assist local governments with economic development related programs and projects.
- Winnebago County Community Development Block Grant – Economic Development Program. Provides low interest funding for business and industrial development.

State and Federal Economic Development Programs

- **The Community Development Block Grant-Public Facilities for Economic Development (CDBG-PFED) Program** is a federally funded program administered by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce. A CDBG-PFED grant is designed to assist communities that want to expand or upgrade their infrastructure to accommodate businesses that will create new jobs. A local unit of government is limited to \$1,000,000 per calendar year and no more than \$750,000 can be used to benefit a single business or a group of related businesses.
- **The Community Development Block Grant-Economic Development (CDBG-ED) Program** is a federally funded program administered by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce. It is designed to assist businesses that will invest private funds and create jobs as they expand or relocate to Wisconsin. The Department of Commerce awards funds to a local unit of government as a grant, which then loans the funds to a business that commits to create jobs for low and moderate-income residents. When the business repays the loan, the community retains the funds to start a local revolving loan fund. This fund can then be used to finance additional economic development projects within the community.
- **Community Development Zones** are specially designated areas in the state. Once created they exist for 20 years with a potential for extending the zone for another 5 years. The zones range from small rural areas to large metropolitan areas. A certified employer in a zone can earn a tax credit against a Wisconsin income tax liability for job creation and for environmental remediation.
- **Rural Economic Development (RED) Early Planning Grant Program** is designed to assist rural business with 25 employees or less. Grants may only be used for professional services such as preparation of a feasibility study, market study, or business plan.
- **Wisconsin Development Fund – Technology Development Fund (WDF)** helps finance product research and development and commercialization.
- **Wisconsin Development Fund-Major Economic Development Program (MED)** provides financial assistance for business startups or expansions that can create or retain a significant number of jobs and to leverage private capital investment.
- **Transportation Facilities Economic Assistance and Development Program** funds transportation facilities improvements (road, rail, harbor and airport) that are part of an economic development project.
- **Wisconsin Rural Partners** is a non-profit organization chartered to pursue an educational mission dedicated to building collaborative partnerships across the public and private sectors for the benefit of rural Wisconsin. Since December 1992, the organization has served as Wisconsin's state rural development council (SRDC) through a cooperative agreement with the US Department of Agriculture.

Economic Development

20-Year Vision

In 2030, we envision Nepeuskun to have been preserved as an agriculture-based community. Farms and farming flourish, with each generation picking up where the last has left off.

The nearby cities of Berlin, Ripon, Green Lake, and Oshkosh provide much of our shopping and services needs in their quaint and conveniently located downtowns. These communities continue to provide for the manufacturing and industrial employment base for non-farm residents. The gradual developments of farm-supporting uses and activities have also provided employment to Town residents. With good jobs locally, most residents work within a short distance of their homes. And some even work at home in their home-based businesses.

In this future vision, tourism flourishes as a result of our abundant natural resources. Nepeuskun is recognized as beautiful respite for people looking to get away from the bustle of urban life. Rush Lake is a major draws for tourists where hunting, fishing, paddling, and bicycling opportunities are plentiful.

The town has proven its commitment to economic prosperity by capitalizing on its agriculture and natural resource heritage while mitigating the impacts of incompatible land uses and the degradation of the natural

The following goals, objectives, and policies are intended to provide a comprehensive approach for achieving this vision. The order in which these goals, objectives, and policies are listed does not necessarily denote their priority.

Goals

Goals are broad, advisory statements that express general public priorities about how the Town should approach preservation and development issues.

- G6.1** Support the Town’s agricultural economy by ensuring prime farmland is permanently retained for agricultural uses.
- G6.2** Encourage economic development opportunities appropriate to the Town’s resources, character, and service level.

- G6.3** Protect and enhance the Town’s scenic and environmental character as an economic asset to the Town and the region.
- G6.4** Recognize agriculture and tourism as important economic resources and support the preservation and enhancement of these resources.

Objectives

Objectives suggest future directions in a way that is more specific than goals. The accomplishment of an objective contributes to the fulfillment of a goal.

- O6.1** Focus economic development efforts on natural resources, farming, nature and farm-related businesses, and small, community-serving businesses in limited areas.
- O6.2** Discourage the sale of prime farmland to non-agricultural interests.
- O6.3** Direct rural, non-farm uses to those areas least suitable for cultivation.

- 06.4** Encourage participation in a farmland preservation program.
 - 06.5** Capitalize on the Town's recreational resources (lakes, rivers, trails, etc) to encourage and locate appropriate retail and service businesses, such as bed and breakfasts, outfitters, parks, cross country ski trails, biking trails, walking trails and/or nature sanctuaries.
 - 06.6** Discourage economic development that could negatively impact the Town's rural character, outstanding natural resources, or groundwater resources.
 - 06.7** Assist in the promotion and attraction of agricultural related services and industries to maintain agriculture as a viable business.
 - 06.8** Direct industrial or manufacturing uses to locate in nearby cities or villages.
 - 06.9** Promote the careful placement and design of mineral extraction sites, wireless telecommunication facilities, and other uses that may have a significant visual, environmental, or neighboring property owner impact.
- P6.6** Allow small, low-impact non-farm businesses on farm properties where there will be no negative impacts on surrounding properties.

Policies

Policies are rules, courses of action, or programs used to ensure Plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives.

- P6.1** Investigate the use of grant monies to purchase development rights.
- P6.2** Investigate the use grant monies to pursue rural economic development opportunities.
- P6.3** Consider adopting a right to farm ordinance.
- P6.4** Consider adopting an ordinance regarding large animal unit operations (CAFOs).
- P6.5** Allow home-based businesses where there will be no impact on surrounding properties.